

Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips Thursday, May 17, 2007

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Foster Care	2
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	3-8
Juvenile Justice	9-12
Health Care	13-17
Day Care	18
Domestic Violence	19
Vulnerable Adults	20-21
Homelessness	22-24
Transportation Assistance	25
Migrant Workers	26
Unemployment	27
Job Training	28-31
State Employees	32
News Release	33



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published May 14, 2007

Michigan residents are invited to Change a Lifetime: Share Your Heart, Open Your Home, Offer Your Help

By Rose Homa

Michigan Federation for Children and Families

The general public is invited to join the Michigan Association for Foster, Adoptive and Kinship (MAFAK) Parents and the Michigan Federation for Children and Families in a celebration of May as Foster Care Month in Michigan at the State Capitol in downtown Lansing on Thursday, May 17.

Themed "Change a Lifetime: Share Your Heart, Open Your Home, Offer Your Help," the event hopes to build on last year's success that drew a crowd of over 200. The day starts with a 10 a.m. News Conference and Rally on the Capitol steps, where speakers will express appreciation to Michigan's foster parents and draw attention to the need for more foster families.

Running from 10 a.m. through 1:30 p.m. under a large tent (rain or shine) will be a Foster Care Resource Fair with refreshments, vendors and organizations supportive of foster families. Exhibitors from across the state will have on hand lots of written materials and promotional items to inform and pique the interest of prospective foster parents.

The events at the Capitol serve as a kick-off for the Spring Training Conference of MAFAK, which runs May 18-20 at the Holiday Inn South Lansing. The conference theme is "Hope and Knowledge—Linking Parents Together."

Dave Pelzer, author of *A Child Called It*, is the scheduled keynote speaker. For details, visit www.mafak.msu.edu or call Mary DeRose at (269) 637-5093 or Adele Maat at (616) 396-2298.

On-site registration is open every day of the conference. MAFAK Parents is a statewide membership organization committed to the retention and empowerment of families to successfully parent all children placed in their care by providing training, advocacy, legislation and support groups.

The Michigan Federation for Children and Families is a statewide human services advocacy organization whose members are private, nonprofit child and family service agencies, statewide and regional affiliates and individuals dedicated to meeting the needs of Michigan's vulnerable children and families.

Copyright 2007 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to regular web page](#)

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

May 16, 2007

Former Canton Township child care provider faces trial

Iveory Perkins / The Detroit News

CANTON TOWNSHIP -- A former day care director accused of failing to report abuse of a toddler who died last year will stand trial after a judge rejected dismissing the case today.

Attorneys for Jacqueline Hadwin, 36, asked 35th District Judge Ronald Lowe to dismiss the single count of failure to report child abuse or neglect against 2-year-old Allison Newman because Hadwin claims she didn't suspect abuse.

Allison died last September of blunt force trauma to the head in the home of her foster parents in Canton Township. The foster mother, Carol Poole, is charged with murder in the toddler's death.

"Nowhere in my client's report does it say she suspected abuse," said Todd Flood, one of Hadwin's attorneys. "But two other people did, so they are the ones that are on the hook."

Allison was in the care of Childtime Child Care Center for about six months until her death on Sept. 22. Two workers claim they told Hadwin that Allison may have been abused but she failed to report their suspicions to the state.

The two employees don't face prosecution because prosecutors say they were improperly trained on reporting suspected abuse.

Hadwin could spend up to 93 days in jail and/or pay a \$500 fine if convicted of failing to report abuse.

You can reach Iveory Perkins at (734) 462-2672 or iveory.perkins@detnews.com.

[Return to regular web page](#)



Accused molestor to appear in circuit court later this month

Commerce Township man allegedly abused adopted daughter

May 16, 2007

The case against a 48-year-old Commerce Township man, accused of sexually abusing his 14-year-old adopted daughter, was bound over to Oakland County Circuit Court today.

The man attorney waived his exam today in Novi's 52-1 District Court, where the man was charged last week with four counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct. He's set to be arraigned in circuit court at 1:30 p.m. May 29.

Police found out about the alleged abuse while interviewing her after she was discovered in a Waterford motel room with Richard Carrasco, 27, of Midland, Texas, who has been charged with multiple criminal sexual conduct counts, as well as with accosting a child and possession of a controlled substance.

The teen — who tried to run away earlier this month with a man she met on the Internet — told police that her father touched her several times over the last year.

The girl's father remains in the Oakland County Jail, with his bond set at \$4-million.

By Gina Damron

Copyright © 2007 Detroit Free Press Inc.



Task force fans out to check for child abuse

Police sweeps bring arrests

May 17, 2007

BY BEN SCHMITT

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Inside the east side Detroit CVS pharmacy, he's a polite, well-dressed manager, even cordial to sheriff's officers as they handcuff him and lead him out to a police car.

But looks can be deceiving, at least according to the allegations against 30-year-old Lamont Crocker, accused of third-degree child abuse.

Crocker, arrested Wednesday afternoon, is accused of severely beating his 7-year-old son for not flushing a toilet.

"Child abusers continue to attack and exploit our children," said Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy. "It's up to us to find new and more creative ways to intervene."

Today, Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans will announce the formation of Project Guardian, a collaborative effort aimed at cracking down on child abuse. Worthy's office also is involved along with Detroit police, the Michigan Department of Corrections, the state Department of Human Services and Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano.

Just days before the announcement of Project Guardian, a task force of officers arrested 15 people suspected of child abuse and 30 others on non-abuse-related charges in Wayne County on Tuesday and Wednesday.

One was Fremeka O'Steen, 36, of Detroit who was wanted for more than year. She's accused of burning the feet of a 3-year-old girl she was babysitting to the point where doctors feared the girl's toes would have to be amputated. Deputies learned of the accusations against O'Steen while organizing Project Guardian.

Part of the operation's goal is to clean up old warrants and assist local police departments, officials said.

Besides going after child-abuse suspects wanted on warrants, the program is designed to closely monitor convicted child abusers while they are on probation or parole.

For example, sheriff's officers and state corrections officers performed spot checks during the past two days, visiting the homes of about 150 probationers and parolees convicted of various child-abuse offenses ranging from neglect to sex crimes.

The goal of the spot check is to determine whether parolees and probationers violated any terms of their release, such as having children in the home when they were ordered to stay away from children.

Spot check teams fanned out across the county, visiting homes from Detroit to Livonia.

Evans said the spot check unit would notify the state Department of Human Services of people found in violation of their probation related to child-abuse convictions. Previously, the human services department wasn't notified about such probation violations, Evans said.

"Identifying the wanted child abuser is one aspect of the program," Evans said Wednesday. "But more important is the closer communication between agencies and a commitment to protect our children against child abuse."

Evans pointed to Tuesday's arrest of Patrick Clark, a 38-year-old convicted of child sexual

abuse from Macomb County. Investigators went to arrest him in a Detroit home on a parole violation on an unrelated charge.

They found Clark living with a woman and her young children, which violated his parole terms.

"This is exactly the type of case the Project Guardian was set up to find and may have helped us prevent another child from being victimized," Evans said.

Contact **BEN SCHMITT** at 313-223-4296 or bcschmitt@freepress.com.

Copyright © 2007 Detroit Free Press Inc.



Tara's estate awarded \$50 million judgment

Children to get assets; Stephen Grant forbidden from profiting

By Jameson Cook
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

The estate of Tara Grant was awarded a \$50 million judgment against Stephen Grant and became the beneficiary of Tara's major assets, in two rulings Wednesday.

Judge Matthew Switalski of Macomb County Circuit Court granted the \$50 million request Wednesday afternoon hours after Probate Court Judge Pamela O'Sullivan approved Alicia Standerfer's request to funnel the proceeds of her sister's two life insurance policies, 401(k) plan and half of the Grant home to the estate, which primarily includes the Grants' two children.

The maneuvers will allow Standerfer, who is representing her sister's estate, to soon begin the process of selling the Grant home in Carriage Hills subdivision in Washington Township and conduct an estate sale of the personal belongings of the Grants. They stop Grant from profiting from his alleged slaying of Tara Grant and from collecting any of her assets.

"It's a very good day," Standerfer's attorney, Patrick Simasko, said after the circuit court hearing. "We don't expect to see any of this money. ... But what this will do is prevent him from profiting from a book deal in the future or selling any pictures on the Internet or anything like that."

Alicia Standerfer and her husband, Erik, traveled five hours from their southern Ohio home to attend the two hearings.

Stephen Grant had 21 days from the date the circuit court lawsuit was filed April 4, but did not respond to either legal action.

Kris Utykanski, Stephen Grant's brother-in-law, said afterward over the telephone that Stephen Grant did not oppose the probate court action because Tara's assets "belong to the children."

He said the \$50 million lawsuit is a "side issue" in the case, and even if Stephen Grant wanted to contest it, he could not afford to do so.

"It (the lawsuit) is what it is, it really doesn't affect us one way or another," he said. "In order to contest it you need to hire a lawyer, and there is no money to do that."

The lawsuit will allow Standerfer to search for any other assets held by Grant, such as an interest in a business his family owns in Mount Clemens.

Standerfer also will be able to "attach" Stephen Grant's half of the house to the judgment, Simasko said. Even after Wednesday's rulings, Grant still retains legal right to half of the house, which has a market value of \$270,000.

In approving the award, Judge Switalski agreed with Simasko that it was a "somewhat academic exercise" because of the extreme unlikelihood Grant would ever have that much money to hand over to the estate.

"You have to come up with an amount," Simasko said. "You have to have a number, and this

is the number we picked. ... They would give \$50 million to get their mom back."

Switalski commented from the bench: "There's really nothing to go on. I'll grant the request."

But the amount was based on calculations by Simasko. Forty million dollars comes from the children receiving \$750 per day for the rest of their lives, her parents -- Gerald and Mary Destrampe -- receiving \$100 per day and Standerfer receiving \$50 per day.

It also included about \$5 million for Tara's loss of income over 31 more years of work, with her most recent salary being \$168,000, and \$2.5 million for her pain and suffering.

Included was \$17,000 for funeral and burial expenses.

The probate motion was granted following a short hearing in which Simasko told Judge O'Sullivan: "A person that kills another person cannot benefit from the crime."

"I have no hesitation in granting this request," O'Sullivan said.

Simasko would not reveal the value of the two life insurance policies, one from her employer, Washington Group International, and the second an accidental death policy, and the 401(k) plan.

He believes the estate will collect on the accidental policy because even though Stephen Grant's actions may have been intentional, "It was an accident to her."

Simasko said any money that is received, "will flow down to the children."

Grant, 37, is charged with first-degree murder and mutilation of a body for the Feb. 9 slaying of Tara, 34, in their Washington Township home. He was arrested March 4 in a park in northern Michigan after he fled March 2 during a search of his home in which police found Tara Grant's torso. He allegedly cut up her body at USG Babbitt in Mount Clemens and tried to hide her remains in a wooded area at Stony Creek Metropark near their home.

Grant, who is being held in the Macomb County Jail, allegedly confessed to police to strangling his wife in the bedroom of their home. He had reported her missing Feb. 14.

A preliminary examination to determine whether there was probable cause a crime was committed and Grant committed it, and whether the case should advance to circuit court, is scheduled for June 4 in 42-1 District Court in Romeo in front of Judge Denis LeDuc.

The two children are living with Standerfer and her husband following a under court order.

The Standerfers and Grant's sister and her husband, Kelly and Kris Utykanski of Sterling Heights, are seeking adoption of the Grant children, and are scheduled to go to juvenile court next month.

The Standerfers and the state Department of Human Services filed motions in juvenile court to terminate Stephen Grant's parental rights.

The Utykanskis filed the adoption request in an attempt to have the parental rights transferred to them, undercutting the termination requests.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.macombdaily.com/stories/051707/loc_standerfer001.shtml

This is a printer friendly version of an article from www.Monroenews.com
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published May 16, 2007

Students face jail time for bomb threats

Two Monroe County students are looking at jail time for making bomb threats at their schools.

One case was resolved in adult court Tuesday afternoon when a Bedford High School student pleaded guilty to making a bomb threat and is expected to receive six months in adult jail.

In the other case, a Jefferson High School freshman on Monday admitted in juvenile court responsibility for making a bomb threat and should spend the summer in the Monroe County Youth Center.

Monroe County Prosecutor William P. Nichols said bomb threats made by students are not going to be treated lightly.

"I think this sends the right message and a strong message," Mr. Nichols said. "Our office takes this seriously."

In the Bedford case, Brock Rigel, 18, of Temperance avoided trial scheduled for today in Monroe County Circuit Court when he pleaded guilty to making a false bomb threat, which is a four-year felony.

Mr. Rigel is accused of leaving a threatening message on his computer screen while in school Nov. 3. He was 17 years old at the time, which is considered an adult under Michigan law.

Police reports said the message was left on Mr. Rigel's computer during computer class. Although the word "bomb" never was used, it clearly was a threatening message, Mr. Nichols said.

"I hate this school," the message was quoted as saying in police reports. "Don't come to school. It will go off. I'm trying to save your life."

As part of the plea agreement, Mr. Rigel must pay full restitution to Bedford Public Schools, law enforcement and the prosecutor's office. That amount should be about \$1,000.

Circuit Judge Michael W. LaBeau will sentence Mr. Rigel on July 5. As part of the agreement, Mr. Rigel, who is out on bond, is expected to spend six months in jail beginning this summer. The judge will make the final decision.

Jon White, superintendent of Bedford Public Schools, said Mr. Rigel was a senior and has been expelled.

"In these times, threats of this nature are not a joking manner," Mr. White said. "We will pursue and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law."

In the Jefferson case, a 15-year-old girl admitted responsibility to the bomb threat charge in Monroe County Probate court and is expected to spend the summer in the youth center.

The girl, who has been expelled, in April wrote a threat on a shelf in a girl's bathroom so school would let out early. There was no evacuation and the girl was caught that day.

Mr. Nichols said the student, whose name was not released because she is a juvenile, also agreed to pay restitution, which also should be in the \$1,000 range. She is being held in the youth center and will be sentenced on June 14.

Mr. Nichols said he wanted to send a clear message to students that he will not tolerate such behavior.

"I wanted felony charges, I wanted to make all costs were reimbursed and, three, I definitely wanted jail time," he said. "I don't want to treat these cases lightly."

Recent bomb threats that evacuated Monroe High School are still being investigated.

Prosecutor requests raise for assistant in juvenile affairs

By SUE LATUSZEK

Alpena News

Published: Thursday, May 17, 2007

Alpena County Prosecutor Dennis Grenkowicz approached the county finance committee Wednesday to ask for a pay raise for the assistant prosecutor covering juvenile affairs.

“I am going to ask that Margaret Ricker’s salary be raised to \$21,000 per year,” Grenkowicz said. Ricker currently earns an annual salary of \$17,000.

“I believe that the revenue that’s been coming in justifies (the increase),” he said.

Finance committee members informed Grenkowicz he would have to present the issue to the county personnel committee, which will then make a referral to the finance committee.

Grenkowicz said his office recently received revenue from the state that was somewhat unexpected.

The prosecutor received reimbursement of \$13,506 for the prosecution of food stamp fraud cases. Grenkowicz said he knew the funds would be reimbursed but did not know when, therefore he did not add the amount into his budget.

Committee members recommended unanimously to approve setting aside \$2,000 to fund expert witness testimony for abuse and neglect cases for the remainder of the year, as well as paying two bills totaling \$370.

“We’ve had an increase, most unfortunately, of abuse and neglect cases this year,” Grenkowicz said.

Committee members voted unanimously to recommend approval of security enhancements to the probate office. Improvements include replacing windows and counters, a buzzer system to open the door into the office and windows for the doors of the probation offices.

“The buzzer on the door is a definite security issue,” said committee member Lyle VanWormer.

Maintenance Superintendent Tom Christianson estimated the cost of the project to be about \$2,000. Funding is available in the building and grounds fund.

In other business:

Security issues were cited in the committee’s decision to deny replacing two windows in the 911 building with ones that open.

Committee members voted unanimously to approve turning a former storage area into a private changing room at Plaza Pool for parents of children too young to use the locker rooms by themselves or those who need assistance in changing.

Unanimous approval was given to upgrade lighting at the pool. Director Brandy Norton informed committee members the Friends of the Plaza Pool will provide up to \$5,000 for the project.

Treasurer Joelyn McCallum reported the general fund balance as of the end of April is \$488,000. Last year the balance was \$1,194,000.

Unanimous approval was given to retain Verizon for phone service for the county at a cost of \$1,500 per month.

Committee members voted unanimously to approve paying only the portion of a bill from Northern Lights Arena to the Older Persons Fund related to ticket discounts, in the amount of \$400. An additional \$4,500 for administration fees will not be reimbursed.

Approval was recommended for the sheriff’s office to purchase two used vehicles for use at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center for

\$22,000. Sheriff Steve Kieliszewski said the purchase, along with the \$8,000 to equip the vehicles, is a \$20,000 savings from the \$50,000 budgeted for the purchase.

Sue Latuszek can be reached via e-mail at **slatuszek@thealpenanews.com** or by phone at 358-5693.

Care Center receives \$35,000 BCBS grant

By RICH ADAMS

Tribune Editor

CHEBOYGAN - A free medical clinic serving the Cheboygan area has received a \$35,000 grant from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan and the Blue Care Network.

The Northern Care Center on Water Street in Cheboygan is the recipient of the grant, which will be used to help support clinic administration and maintain prescription, dental and eye-care programs, said Health Care Advocate Coordinator Kathryn Plume.

"The majority cannot afford health insurance premiums," Plume said in a news release. "Many of our patients have medical conditions such as hypertension, asthma and diabetes. All are life-threatening if left untreated, and all patients are encouraged to be proactive and responsible for their health."

She noted that the Northern Care Center sees an average of 101 patients a months and hopes to increase that number by 70.

In issuing the grants - which this year total \$1 million for 32 free health care clinics - one Blue Cross official said the money will be used for a variety of items.

"Just some general information is that 32 clinics are receiving the grants, which range from \$8,000 to \$50,000, and the money will be used for a variety of purposes," said Kevin Seitz, Blues executive vice president of health care value enhancement. "Some will be used for office equipment, some for expanding existing facilities, which allows them to see additional patients.

"Some allow for patient medication for those with chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension," he continued. "Others just keep the lights on in the clinics."

He pointed out that most of the clinic professional staff is composed of volunteers.

"I think it is important to note that the free clinics are staffed by volunteers, particularly the medical professionals such as the doctors and nurses," Seitz explained Wednesday during a teleconference. "These are people who give of their time and energy to help provide services to those without insurance."

Joyce Hardy, president of Free Clinics of Michigan and manager of the Helen M. Nickless Volunteer Clinic in Essexville, said the need for free medical care is high.

She said the Essexville facility serves six counties, and some people have to drive great distances to seek medical care.

"It's amazing how far people have to drive to get free care," she said.

Last year's grant for Northern Care Center was used to create an advocacy program to help patients obtain financial help for dental and optical care, bifocal glasses and diabetic testing supplies, according to the news release. It also taught patients about diseases and their effects and ways to improve their health. Also paid for by last year's grant were a computer upgrade and the ability to hire a health care coordinator.

[Return to regular web page](#)

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

May 17, 2007

Videos protest possible cuts in Medicaid

YouTube features seek to push Internet sit-in as response to the Michigan Legislature budget battle.

Kim Kozlowski / The Detroit News

Born with only one lung, 20-year-old Jacob West sits in a wheelchair as his mother injects liquid nutrition into his stomach and cleans the tracheotomy attached to his ventilator.

"It's hard to live with disabilities," West, of Nashville, Mich., says during a five-minute video posted to YouTube.com.

The West video is one of three Michigan families' videos made to protest looming cuts to Medicaid, the state public health program for the poor, children, disabled and elderly. The videos also ask people to join them at a virtual protest today.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has said she will have to make a 6 percent cut to Medicaid providers on June 1 if the state budget crisis is not resolved. If that happens, she said Wednesday that people will die.

West's mother, Lori West, said cuts could limit her ability to care for her son at home and he would have to be institutionalized.

"We take care of these children 24 hours a day," West said. "We're willing to dedicate our lives and our finances. But we can't do it by ourselves."

The cuts would likely result in the loss of essential nursing care needed for Keith Alexander's 5-year-old daughter, Hannah, who suffers from several disabilities and is featured in pictures on a YouTube.com video.

"We really resent that politicians who have not walked in our shoes are making decisions about what can be bought in terms of the supplies that we need in order to care for our child," Alexander of Ann Arbor said in his video. "We're requesting that they leave Michigan Medicaid alone."

You can reach Kim Kozlowski at (313) 222-2024 or kkozlowski@detnews.com.

Family videos

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGnk6tufMM8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz5455f4DFY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cl86N6zJQA>

To join the 24-hour virtual protest, go today to:

<http://bang.calit2.net/sdhacklab/>

[Return to regular web page](#)



Medicaid cuts

Lansing's proposed savings would buy Hurley hardship

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

By Journal Editorial Board

It's shameful for hospitals serving a disproportionate number of the poor and uninsured to be made to beg in a state budget fight over taxes and spending.

No matter how Lansing ultimately fixes its chronic financial problems, Hurley Medical Center minimally has been put under unnecessary stress because of a proposed 6 percent Medicaid cut and funding delays that threaten this vital institution's very solvency.

Probably Gov. Jennifer Granholm had no other choice but to propose these Medicaid reductions, what with the budget and tax issues unresolved. But shortchanging hospitals on this care not only is unfair, for Hurley, a so-called public institution, the strategy is counterproductive, if not stupid.

Just where would patients Hurley serves go if it closed its doors? Politicians should try to envision a steady stream of poor needing care flowing into the emergency rooms at McLaren and Genesys - and perhaps their counterparts further away. While virtually every hospital serves charity and Medicaid patients, facilities like Hurley handle the bulk of it at enormous cost to their bottom lines.

For instance, for every \$1 Hurley spends on Medicaid clients it is reimbursed 74 cents. With 45 percent of the hospital's patients on this government aid, and 5 percent with no insurance whatsoever, it's evident why Hurley lost \$3 million after nine months of this fiscal year.

Yet as bad as that is, the hospital had been improving from a year ago, when it lost \$13.3 million. However, the governor's proposal to cut Medicaid 6 percent would add \$4 million in red ink annually, and the state's plan to delay these same payments, too, amounts to a \$6-million hit. Together, they would boost Hurley's annual liability from treating Medicaid and uninsured patients by 50 percent.

What's worse is the long-term downward trend for Hurley for reasons separate from this, along with declining state support for medical care. Since 2001, Michigan has cut \$686 million in health services to children, elderly and the disabled on Medicaid. And Hurley's noninsured caseload has been growing, making it ever more difficult to cover losses with fees from privately insured patients.

Ominous, too, those cherished customers, are being lured by Hurley's competitors with new and updated facilities - amenities a financially strapped Hurley has trouble matching.

In short, Hurley's special mission as a safety net hospital is hard enough to fulfill with solid state backing. And now it and other hospitals are fighting for Medicaid funding that's already insufficient. Most of them probably could cope with the austerity, but in the case of Hurley it would shorten the period - currently projected at five years - before the hospital runs out of cash. Surely that would be a crisis Lansing truly couldn't afford.

©2007 Flint Journal

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



Slashed Medicaid would ripple

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

BARRIE BARBER

THE SAGINAW NEWS

Saginaw hospitals are bracing for 6 percent cuts in Medicaid payments if state lawmakers don't reach agreement within weeks to wipe out a \$700 million budget deficit.

St. Mary's of Michigan hospital faces a \$1.3 million cut effective June 1 through

Sept. 30, when the reduction would hit, hospital officials said.

Covenant Medical Center would lose \$800,000, said spokeswoman Leslie Perry.

Neither hospital said the reductions would curtail services, but the lower payments would affect their bottom lines, officials said.

Even so, some mid-Michigan lawmakers contend that less money for Medicaid reimbursement will mean less patient care statewide.

"We can't keep cutting and expect physicians to treat our Saginaw County residents," said state Rep. Kenneth B. Horn, a Frankenmuth Republican, who said Medicaid reimbursement ranks low in the region.

"While we have some real tough decisions ahead of us, with this one in particular we will be balancing the budget on the backs of the elderly, on the poor and on our children."

State Rep. Andy Coulouris, a Saginaw Democrat, said a bleak budget picture forces hard choices even though he doesn't favor Medicaid cuts.

"This is absolutely going to impact access to health care," he said. "Anyone who has private insurance is going to end up paying more because of these cuts."

"I'm not proud that we as a state have to be enacting these kinds of cuts, but I fully recognize just how bleak the budget picture is."

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm OK'd the \$49 million statewide reduction in Medicaid payments if legislators can't agree on deficit reduction proposals by Friday, June 1. Schools face a cut of \$122 per student in state aid, too.

"They will not be the only budget cuts made," Granholm spokeswoman Liz Boyd warned. "Across the board, there will be devastating cuts."

State Sen. Roger N. Kahn, a Saginaw Township Republican, said the pending Medicaid reductions are "offensive" and "illegal."

"Those who would vote for those kinds of cuts are, in my opinion, trying to extort money from hospitals and engage in blackmail," the cardiologist said.

The result shortchanges medical care providers who already receive below-cost reimbursements, he said. It also violates rates set in legislation last year and may encourage some medical care providers to drop Medicaid patients, Kahn added.

"Those people end up getting sicker and sicker and their prognosis gets worse and people die," he said. "Let's call it the way it is: Children die. This governor needs to understand something about caring, and she apparently does not."

Boyd said Kahn is off the mark.

She blamed the Senate Republican Caucus for the failure to reach a solution on the deficit after the Democratic governor proposed a 2 percent service tax and budget cuts as an answer.

"Gov. Granholm has proposed a plan, a comprehensive solution, that would avoid all of these draconian cuts," the spokeswoman said. "If Sen. Kahn doesn't want these cuts to happen, he has it within his power in the Senate to vote for a comprehensive plan to solve the budget crisis.

"These (cuts) are not the governor's first choice. These are the Republican choices that are forced on people."

Lawmakers could avoid the cuts if they reach a budget compromise, she said.

Kahn said he proposed \$70 million in reductions in the state Department of Community Health. Among his ideas: using health professionals' license fees to reduce the deficit, ending Medicaid eligibility for undocumented residents and stopping the practice of putting money aside for health programs that no longer exist. v

Barrie Barber covers politics and government for The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9725.

©2007 Saginaw News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **livingstondaily.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published May 17, 2007

Brighton woman gets probation in day-care case

By Lisa Roose-Church
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

A Brighton woman known for being a government watchdog was sentenced Tuesday to six months of probation for a misdemeanor conviction of operating an unregistered day-care business.

Livingston County District Judge Carol Sue Reader also ordered Susan Lynn Walters-Steinacker to pay \$500 in fines and costs and perform community service, according to court records.

Probation will be waived if Walters-Steinacker becomes a licensed day-care provider.

Defense attorney Jerry Sherwood said Wednesday that his client was in the process of getting her state license when she was charged in January.

"She was baby-sitting at the parents' homes when a family member with a grudge reported she had kids (at her home) one day," Sherwood explained.

"She was trying to do the right thing."

That day, Jan. 29, is the date the prosecutor's office says she violated a state law that states that anyone who provides day care for one to six unrelated children in a private home for more than four weeks in a year must register with the Department of Human Services, while those who care for seven or more children must apply for a license.

Prosecutor David Morse has said that representatives with the state Department of Human Services referred the case to his office for charges after Walters-Steinacker, 52, failed to register her in-home day-care business as required by state law.

"DHS gave her the opportunity to either stop doing it or get a license, and she did neither," Morse said.

"When she did neither,
they submitted it to us for
prosecution."

Morse said his office has no evidence to suggest Walters-Steinacker is caring for children in her home today.

However, that does not negate that Walters-Steinacker did break the law, Morse said, so his office continued to seek prosecution.

Contact Daily Press & Argus reporter Lisa Roose-Church at (517) 552-2846 or at lrchurch@gannett.com.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **livingstondaily.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published May 17, 2007

Man arrested 90 minutes after being released from jail

By Lisa Roose-Church
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

A Hamburg Township man arrested on Mother's Day for assaulting his father was rearrested within 90 minutes after his release from jail for allegedly assaulting his younger brother.

Sheriff Bob Bezotte said Jerame Christopher Garcia was booked into the Livingston County Jail at about 5:30 p.m. Sunday on domestic violence charge for assaulting his father while the two argued at the family's home in the 8800 block of Deering Avenue.

The 18-year-old man had been released from jail on a \$500 personal bond when he went to the CVS pharmacy with his mother and brother.

Bezotte said while at the pharmacy, at 2235 E. Grand River Ave. in Genoa Township, Garcia reportedly argued with his family, who eventually drove across the street to the Department of Human Services' office, where the fight escalated.

"He punched his younger brother," Bezotte said. "When officers arrived, he was pounding on the truck and jumping on the truck."

Police subsequently arrested Garcia on a second charge of domestic violence. He was arraigned on the second charge Tuesday and remains in the county jail in lieu of a \$20,000 bond.

Garcia next appears in court June 11 for a pretrial hearing before Livingston County District Judge Suzanne Geddis. If no plea deal is reached, the case has been set for jury selection on June 29.

Contact Daily Press & Argus reporter Lisa Roose-Church at (517) 552-2846 or at lrchurch@gannett.com.



Accused swindler faces trial for bilking 87-year-old man

By Gordon Wilczynski
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A man accused of swindling an 87-year-old Eastpointe man of \$419,000 has been bound over to Macomb Circuit Court to stand trial.

Terency Netzloff, formerly of Orion Township, posed as an investment counselor and swindled the money from a man he met during a 1996 seminar at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Eastpointe, police said.

The alleged victim, Armand W. Knorr, said he never received any paperwork from the brokerage firms Netzloff said he was representing. He said at first he didn't question Netzloff because he trusted him.

"I believed everything he told me," said Knorr.

Macomb County assistant prosecutor John Latella said if convicted, Netzloff might receive only a 1-year jail sentence because he has no prior criminal record. Latella said he would rather see the court impose a 5-year probation sentence. He said authorities then could monitor Netzloff's actions and force him to report to a probation officer once a month.

"My hunch is he has this \$419,000-plus hidden somewhere in the islands," said Latella. "Based on everything that has preceded so far, I believe that's why Netzloff hasn't put up much of a fight.

"I believe he will take his lumps and serve some jail, get out and get his money."

If on probation, Latella said, Netzloff would be forced to pay restitution and give authorities the time to find the money he allegedly stole.

Netzloff, a disbarred attorney, never earned a state license to work as a stock broker nor was he ever registered with the state as an agent for a brokerage firm, according to John Boruta, an agent with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth Agency.

Brenda Gardner of the Michigan Office of Insurance and Financial Services, testified that Netzloff was never registered as an investment counselor.

Netzloff was ordered to stand trial in circuit court by 38th District Judge Norene Redmond who presided over the preliminary examination. She kept Netzloff on \$2 million bond while saying he is a flight risk because of the severity of the charges.

Netzloff was arrested Jan. 11 in the British Virgin Islands on a friend's boat named "Running Free." Authorities were alerted to Netzloff by an anonymous caller who saw his picture in a newspaper. He was brought back to Macomb County on April 26 to stand trial in the Eastpointe case and on charges he swindled \$150,000 from his brother-in-law and mother-in-law in Armada and Richmond Township.

An arraignment on the Eastpointe charges will be held in circuit court at 1:30 p.m. May 29.

Knorr, the alleged victim, said he never saw any dividends from his investment. He testified that Netzloff kept in contact with him and often came to his Eastpointe home. He said they had a 4-year relationship.

Knorr testified that he purchased his first bond from Netzloff in 1999. He said the bond was tax free.

Knorr said he purchased his last bond March 15, 2004. He said Netzloff told him that he worked for Wilson Investment Trust and worked with Huntington Bank. Tom Hogue, a bank fraud investigator for Huntington National Bank, testified that Netzloff never did any business with Huntington.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.macombdaily.com/stories/051707/loc_accused001.shtml

May 17, 2007

Gay Youths Find Place to Call Home in Specialty Shelters

By [IAN URBINA](#)

DETROIT — One girl said she started living on the streets after her mother beat her for dressing like a boy. Another said she ran away from home after her father pulled a gun on her for hanging around with so many “tomboys.” A third said she left home after a family acquaintance raped her because she was a lesbian and he wanted to “straighten her out.”

But gathered at Ruth’s House, a 10-bed emergency shelter for gay homeless youths here in east Detroit, they all said that for the first time they felt safe.

Ruth’s House is one of a small number of shelters for gay youths that have opened around the nation in the past four years, reflecting an increasing awareness among child welfare advocates of the disproportionately high number of gay youths in the homeless population and the special problems they face.

Five years ago, such shelters were rare, but now there are more than 25 nationwide.

Many experts estimate that while gay men and lesbians make up 3 percent to 5 percent of the general population, more than 20 percent of homeless youths under age 21 in many urban areas are gay, according to recent surveys of street youths and shelter workers published in peer-reviewed academic journals, and a study released in January by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Coalition for the Homeless.

Once on the streets, advocates and researchers said, gay youths may be avoiding group homes, shelters and the foster care system because they are afraid they will face violence and harassment.

Some gay youths have said they were beaten in full view of shelter staff members who did nothing to help. Others said they were forced to wear distinctly colored jumpsuits so they could be identified easily in the shelter population.

“What that means is that these youth are an extremely vulnerable population,” said Jamie Van Leeuwen, a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the [University of Colorado](#).

In an eight-city study published in The Child Welfare Journal last year, Mr. Van Leeuwen and others found that gay homeless youths were more than twice as likely to have attempted suicide while living on the streets than heterosexual homeless youths. The data drew from surveys conducted in 2004 of homeless youths in Austin, Tex.; Boulder, Colo.; Chicago; Colorado Springs; Denver; Minneapolis; Salt Lake City; and St. Louis.

Circumstances are often difficult to verify, but some social workers said many gay teenagers report running away after experiencing violence at home.

Here in Detroit, Shan’nell Jordan, 18, said she ran away from home when she was 12, after a relative reacted to a rumor that she

was gay by encouraging a friend to rape her. After living on the streets off and on for several years, she said, she moved into a house with two other lesbians this year and does odd jobs while looking for full-time work.

"I tried dressing like a girl for a while, but I couldn't do it," Ms. Jordan said.

Bryan N. Cochran, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Montana in Missoula, said there were no national studies on how often violence occurred between youths and their parents over sexuality. But Professor Cochran said his research, which was based on interviews with homeless service providers and runaway youths, showed that gay homeless youths in Seattle "were almost twice as likely to have ended up on the streets due to physical abuse in the home than were their straight peers."

Gay advocacy groups have urged Congress to provide more money for services for gay and lesbian homeless youths. Federal financing for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, which is up for reauthorization next year, dropped, to \$103.9 million in fiscal year 2006 from \$105.4 million in 2003.

But homeless and youth advocacy groups fear that by pressing for money specifically for gay youths, lobbying will become splintered, and the effort could invite a backlash from antigay factions that would result in less money for homeless youth programs generally. There are 1.6 million homeless youths nationally, a 2002 federal estimate said.

"The center is the only place where I feel safe being me," said Sarah Strickland, 18, referring to Ruth's House. "Out there, I knew I wasn't safe. I knew I might be killed by someone realizing that I'm a girl looking like a boy."

Grace A. McClelland, who runs Ruth's House, said it had a three-month waiting list for its 10-bed shelter, which opened in August. The shelter is named after Ruth Ellis, an African-American lesbian who in the 1930s opened her house in the same neighborhood to gay African-American teenagers. With a staff of seven, it provides school placement, psychological and family counseling and job training. The shelter is financed with private and federal money.

The capacity of gay youth shelters is limited, said Gerald P. Mallon, a professor at the [Hunter College](#) School of Social Work, who has helped open several shelters. In San Francisco, there are about 15 beds to serve a homeless gay youth population that local advocates estimate is in the thousands, Professor Mallon said. In New York City, there are no more than 50 beds for gay homeless youths, he added.

In Cleveland, Mika Major is the director of the Metro Youth Outreach Drop-In Center, one of about 150 centers nationally where homeless gay youths can receive counseling and other services. "The hardest part of the job is telling kids who show up with bruises or horrific stories that we don't have a safe place to send them," Ms. Major said.

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said gay youths' fears about shelters were valid.

"Shelter staff often have the least training and the least oversight, compared to schools or anywhere else" serving gay youths, Mr. Foreman said.

Dilo Cintron, 25, who said he lived on the streets for five years in New York starting in 2000, described being gay in a homeless shelter, saying, "You're lucky if all they do is sneer in these places."

Mr. Cintron said he chose the streets after being beaten nearly unconscious in a shelter by four men. Instead of intervening in the

attack, he said, staff members closed the doors.

Now living in Queens, Mr. Cintron is taking job-training classes and is a volunteer at Sylvia's Place, a shelter for homeless gay youths in Manhattan.

At a shelter in Saline, Mich., near Ann Arbor, staff members removed the door to a gay youth's bedroom, to prevent homosexual behavior. The second bed in the room was left empty, and other residents were warned that if they misbehaved they would have to share the room with the "gay kids," said Krista Girty, a former social worker at the shelter.

At a youth group home in Bedford, Mich., gay teenagers were identified by orange jumpsuits. "It was basically their way to shame people into being antigay," said Andy Wilt, 20, who stayed at the shelter for six months in 2000.

In Ann Arbor, Mary Jo Callan runs the Ozone House, a shelter that serves mostly homeless heterosexual youths but aims to be hospitable to all. Ms. Callan said suburban and rural communities often lacked the money and the political will to open centers that focus on gay youths.

"I think we have to improve the facilities that we have now," Ms. Callan said. "Otherwise, I think the kids simply won't come in from the cold and get the help they need."

[Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)

[<<Back](#)

Gas prices become problematic for non-drivers

Updated: May 16, 2007 09:03 PM EDT

GREENVILLE -- Experts say relief could be on the way, but gas station signs seem contradictory. With gas prices at \$3 plus even people without cars are feeling the trickle-down effects.

Becky Berens has a routine three days each week. Without a car she waits for a volunteer driver with the Department of Human Services to pick her up in Greenville and take her to the doctor's office.

"If we don't get our rides to the appointments, like doctors appointments especially, we cannot get our prescriptions from our doctors," Berens said.

She is on disability and keeping track of multiple prescriptions.

The director of the program in Montcalm county said Becky is one of about 100 people who rely on the service. There are 14 drivers helping out.

The worry for everyone is the rising gas prices.

"The rest of them are talking ... quite a few of them at least, about hanging up their keys until those gas prices come down, and it's going to effect a lot of people," Berens said.

On Tuesday, gas prices spiked to \$3.49 throughout West Michigan. They were about the same on Wednesday.

A report just released from the Energy Information Administration shows some of the refineries that were down, causing the spike in gas prices, are back up and running.

The report indicates that there is some relief in sight, but predicts prices could hover around the \$3 mark all summer.

It is tough news for people like Berens.

"When it hit the big number yesterday, it was like, no we don't know what we're going to do at all," she said.

She said she is not sure what June will bring, she may have to make alternate plans to get to her appointments, whatever that mode of transportation may be.

The Department of Human Services in Lansing said they are aware of the problem and have been discussing solutions so they can keep the program running, but no solutions have come up yet.



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2007 WorldNow and WOODTV. All Rights Reserved.
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).



Muskegon Chronicle

Migrant shortage hurting farmers

Thursday, May 17, 2007

By Federico Martinez

fmartinez@muskegonchronicle.com

Farmers in West Michigan are being forced to destroy thousands of dollars in asparagus crops this spring because there's nobody to pick them.

Local growers worry it's an indication of what could become a yearlong migrant worker shortage that could put some of them out of business and cause grocery prices to skyrocket.

"I've already had to mow 7 acres of asparagus myself," said Rick Sible, an Oceana County farmer whose decision cost him thousands of dollars. "I lost that crop because it had passed its point of quality for harvesting."

Sible's decision to mow the crop means he lost several weeks of harvesting. He's hoping to find enough migrant workers to pick the crops by the time the asparagus regrows.

Other farmers have already determined their whole season is lost, Sible and state agricultural officials say.

"We are seeing slight shortages in West Michigan," said Frances Arangure, agricultural field services operations manager for Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Growth. "Most of the growers are working without full crews."

Some farmers are resorting to sharing their workers, offering them extra work hours.

"Can you imagine what would happen if we can't harvest food in this country?" Sible said. "Food prices could skyrocket like gas prices."

Approximately 80,000 migrant workers and their families come to Michigan each year. But, those numbers have been dwindling in recent years, farmers and state officials agree.

There are many reasons for this. Most migrant workers are U.S. citizens and are opting for more stable, better-paying jobs, such as construction, landscaping and restaurant work, officials say.

"I lost one of our key people to a hotel chain in Texas," said Sible. "We were happy for her, but she was one of our foremen."

Martha Gonzalez-Cortes, director of Michigan's Office of Migrant Affairs, said gas prices, concerns about immigration and not enough housing are problems discouraging migrants from coming to Michigan, especially West Michigan.

Migrant workers in Oceana County are reporting that some farmers are trying to pay them less money this year, said Gonzalez-Cortes.

For example, last year asparagus crops were bountiful, and farmers paid workers by the box. This year crops are much smaller, and growers want to pay hourly wages instead.

"Do you expect farmworkers to not know economics 101?" said Gonzalez-Cortes. "People have the opportunity to vote with their feet and they're not coming."

Jobless Rate Back Up To 7.1%

MIRS, May 16, 2007

Michigan's unemployment rate in April increased six-tenths of a percentage point to 7.1 percent from March's 6.5 percent, according to data released today by the Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG).

Total employment fell by 53,000, while unemployment rose by 29,000. The net impact was a 24,000-person drop in the state's labor force over the month.

"The jump in the April jobless rate underscores the volatility in the state's current labor market, which over the past year has been related to the on-going restructuring of the state's manufacturing sector," said Rick **WACLAWEK**, director of DLEG's Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives. "Looking at a longer period of time, Michigan's unemployment rates have been relatively steady, averaging 6.8 to 7.1 percent since 2003."

Since April 2006, the report showed that total employment declined by 45,000 jobs, or 0.9 percent. The number of workers in the system also fell since April 2006 by 32,000 or 0.6 percent compared to the national labor force, which grew by 1.1 percent in the same period.

The national jobless rate increased slightly by one-tenth of a percentage point in April to 4.5 percent.

The monthly survey of employers showed that the state shed 5,000 jobs during the month of April, meaning total payroll employment stood at 4,310,000. The payroll job decline occurred in construction (down 4,000 jobs) and government (down 4,000 jobs). The losses were somewhat offset by gains in the leisure and hospitality services, which picked up 6,000 positions.

[<<Back](#)

State Hopes to Move People Off Welfare Faster

May 17, 2007 07:31 AM EDT

The State of Michigan is hoping to move people off welfare faster. The Department of Human Services unveiled its new "jobs, education and training" welfare reform program. Under the program, participants will have more access to educational and training opportunities and have more support services. Officials say it's vital to getting participants into the workplace.

Keith Cooley, Dir., Dept. of Labor and Economic Growth: "We are very happy to see these pilot programs begin to flourish and to begin to put skilled workers into the workforce and taking on jobs."

The reformed program is expected to result in 56 million dollars in grant savings.



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2007 WorldNow and WLNS. All Rights Reserved.
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).



Auditors question jobs unit

Career Alliance spending probed

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, May 17, 2007

By Ron Fonger

rfonger@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6317

GENESEE COUNTY - State auditors are questioning nearly \$13,000 in credit card charges run up by executives at the local agency designated to help train low-income people and others for jobs.

The state Department of Labor & Economic Growth is questioning 64 separate credit card charges - ranging from a \$6.38 payment to online bookseller Amazon to \$636 to Badawest restaurant in Flint Township - because of a lack of documentation or because it's unclear how the spending related to the agency's mission.

Besides the Badawest expenses, hundreds of dollars in other charges at local restaurants are being questioned. The state is asking Career Alliance Inc. to turn in documentation supporting the charges and to set up a procedure for employees to repay undocumented credit card costs in the future.

At least four top executives are authorized to make credit card charges, which are reviewed periodically by state monitors.

Career Alliance has yet to resolve the questions, but the nonprofit agency's chief financial officer said the matters are routine, the expenses are reasonable, and the issues will be resolved.

Chief Financial Officer Q.B. Pittman said some recent findings by state monitors can also be attributed to a bureaucratic process sometimes more interested in documenting possible problems than resolving questions informally.

"They come every quarter. They have questions every quarter," said Pittman. "We get a bunch of questions, but we have yet to have a disallowed cost."

The state has been in regular contact with Career Alliance since March, raising questions in a series of letters about internal controls, financial reporting, and allowable costs at the agency.

Area taxpayers could be held responsible for costs the state refuses to pay.

Archie H. Bailey, chairman of the Genesee County Board of Commissioners, said he is very concerned by recent reports.

"I am following what is happening there closely," Bailey said in e-mail. "I will react to the developments at Career Alliance as soon as I have received the final report from the state. These are serious issues."

QUICK TAKE

What's in question?

An April 12 letter from the state Department of Labor & Economic Growth questions \$139,931 in "undocumented/unsupported expenditures, expenditures misclassified and/or charged to incorrect programs, donations and unreasonable payroll costs." Among the problems:

- Corporate credit card invoices for two sample months - May and November 2006 - did not include documentation to support nearly \$13,000 in charges.
- Some credit card charges from restaurants, including lunch meetings among Career Alliance staff, "appear to be unreasonable" and are being questioned.
- Payments are being questioned for \$1,455 for the American Arab Heritage Council's Ensure The Legacy Dinner and \$350 for a Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce Dinner. The state

Career Alliance is a nonprofit agency that administers federal, state and private grants designed to help workers train for and find jobs.

considers the payments to be contributions or donations, which are not allowed.

It had revenues of more than \$21.8 million in the fiscal year that ended June 20, 2004, the last year for which figures are immediately available.

The operation is overseen by the Genesee-Shiawassee Workforce Development Board, which is made up of appointees from the two counties and Flint.

Local officials have some reason for concern over the probe: The region needs every job-training dollar to be spent efficiently because of high unemployment, among other reasons, they say.

In an April 12 letter to Pamela Y. Loving, Career Alliance's president and chief executive officer, a state official said her "executive staff's use of the corporate credit cards continues to lack supporting documentation and unsupported charges are still being paid."

"In addition, meals for meetings (i.e. luncheon meetings between two staff) and costs for motivational training for all staff appear to be unreasonable," says the letter from Bobbi L. Woods, monitoring unit manager for the Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

Loving has been on a medical leave in recent weeks, Pittman said.

Pittman and Michael Zelley, chairman of the Workforce Development Board, said Career Alliance has a track record for resolving questions from state monitors.

Zelley said he "would be amazed if they come back and say that (these are) unreasonable costs."

Zelley said he supports education for staff, including payments for motivational training that the state is questioning.

One charge under question was a \$1,455 payment to the American Arab Heritage Council for its Ensure the Legacy Dinner in December. Pittman said the dinner included a special recognition of Loving and constituted outreach.

"We are required to do outreach," he said. "That's one of the things we can do to let them know we exist."

But the state says the dinner expense isn't allowed because the workforce money can't be used for a contribution or donation.

State spokeswoman Brenda Njiwaji said findings by monitors who visit workforce development agencies, such as Career Alliance, are not unusual. She would not discuss findings involving Career Alliance because some issues haven't been resolved.

Letters from the state to Loving say restaurant and other charges not only must have supporting documentation but also must be reasonable - the type that "would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the costs."

The state said Career Alliance must establish a procedure for employees to pay back undocumented costs charged to the corporate credit card.

In its listing of undocumented or unsupported credit card charges, for example, the state questioned charges of \$30.22 to Thompson Creek Turkey and \$40.05 to Makuch's Red Rooster Restaurant in Flint, both from April 25, 2006; \$52.81 at a Ponderosa Steakhouse on April 26; and \$58.07 at Taboon at the Valley in Flint Township on April 27, according to a spreadsheet of questioned credit card charges from the state.

Pittman said directors of the state's 25 workforce agencies agreed recently to form a committee to discuss problems with some state monitors.

Too often, he said, monitors make harsh findings but have simply misinterpreted information or rules and are at odds with the U.S. Department of Labor.

In some cases, he said, Career Alliance has agreed to pay expenses that the state has questioned with non-federal money, taking care of a problem before the cost might have been disallowed.

The agency agreed to pay back \$2,102 for two charter buses that carried participants in one program to Cedar Point in 2005, according to state records requested by The Flint Journal.

In 2004, it also "reclassified" charges originally made to its federal funding after state monitors questioned the spending. Career Alliance ended up paying for the charges from other funds.

In one case, a check for a contractor to attend a conference in Atlanta was paid by Career Alliance even though the company should have been responsible for the cost of its own training, the state said.

In another case, Career Alliance paid \$1,400 for 12 dinners for a Disability Network Inc. event - an amount paid in error, according to state documents. Five months after the overpayment, the Disability Network, of which Zelle is executive director, repaid \$1,000 of the charge.

©2007 Flint Journal

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

State Employees Get Outlet Coupons

MIRS, May 16, 2007

The Tanger Outlet stores near Howell are giving state employees a free coupon book that's allegedly worth thousands of dollars in discounts.



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Colleen Steinman or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Rally Speakers: Foster parents needed in Michigan

May 17, 2007

LANSING – With more than 18,500 children in Michigan's foster care system, the need for stable, secure and loving foster and adoptive parents continues to grow, DHS Director Marianne Udow said today.

Speaking from the steps of the state Capitol, Udow urged people who care about children to explore how they might become foster or adoptive parents.

"Change a child's life by sharing your heart, opening your home and offering your help," Udow said, echoing the theme of the event. "The loving care provided by people who take action to help protect Michigan's most vulnerable children demonstrates in very concrete ways their commitment to keeping Michigan children safe."

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm declared May as Foster Care Month. To celebrate, an information fair and news conference was held today at the Capitol steps and east lawn. The fair kicks off the annual state conference organized by the Michigan Association of Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents held May 18-20 at the Lansing Holiday Inn South.

"Today we celebrate this month-long appreciation of foster parents and the immense gift they provide to children in Michigan," said Elizabeth Carey, executive director of the Michigan Federation for Children and Families. "Every day they make a difference in a child's life. Every day they provide love and refuge for children in crisis. Every day they are heroes. I personally and on behalf of the Michigan Federation for Children and Families, thank each and every one."

Foster Care Month also provides an opportunity to make Michigan residents more aware of the need for caring, dedicated foster parents and the needs of children in foster care. Children usually enter foster care because of neglect or abuse in their homes. Foster care families provide safe, stable and supportive homes for these children and youths until they can be returned to their parents or are adopted into permanent homes.

Developing an adequate number of qualified foster families and relative caregivers is critical for DHS' family- and child-centered approach to foster care. This approach strives to keep children safely in their own homes when possible. When children must be removed from their family homes for their safety, efforts are focused on keeping siblings together, making more placements with relatives, placing more children whether they can maintain healthy connections with schools, friends and families, and doing more to help youths aging out of the foster care system.

For more information about foster parenting, go to www.michigan.gov/dhs